



# Board Agenda Item 77

DATE: June 16, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Sanja Bugay, Director, Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Agreement with Central Valley Children's Services Network for the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Under Administrative Policy No. 34 for competitive bids or requests for proposals (AP 34) determine that an exception to the competitive bidding requirement under AP 34 is satisfied and a suspension of competition is warranted due to unusual or extraordinary circumstances and that the best interests of the County would be served by entering into an agreement with Central Valley Children's Services Network as it is the only local State-designated Child Care Resource and Referral agency in Fresno County authorized to provide Child Care Navigator services and Trauma-Informed Care training and coaching, has demonstrated it can meet the scope of services outlined in the County's request, and is uniquely qualified as a local Alternative Payment Program provider for the administration of child care voucher payments under the Bridge Program; and**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute an Agreement with Central Valley Children's Services Network to provide child care navigator services, trauma-informed care training and coaching, and child care voucher distribution services, effective July 1, 2026, not to exceed five consecutive years, which includes a three-year base contract and two optional one-year extensions, total not to exceed \$5,211,590.**

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. Approval of the recommended actions will waive the competitive bid process for Child Care Navigator services, Trauma-Informed Care training and coaching, and child care voucher distribution, and will allow the Department of Social Services (Department) to continue participation in the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program). The Bridge Program enhances the safety and stability of foster children by removing lack of child care as a barrier to placement in resource family homes. The recommended agreement will be offset with State, Federal, and Realignment funds. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board choose not to approve the recommended actions, the current agreement for Child Care Navigator services, Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) training and coaching, and child care voucher distribution will expire on June 30, 2026. The Department would be unable to continue participation in the State's Bridge Program, potentially limiting foster care placement options and reducing support for caregivers and child care providers. No other local providers are authorized to deliver the required Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) services.

SUSPENSION OF COMPETITION/SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT:

It is requested that the County find under AP No. 34 that an exception to the competitive bidding requirement is satisfied, and a suspension of competition is warranted due to unusual or extraordinary circumstances. Participation in the Bridge Program requires the Department to deliver coordinated services, including Child Care Navigator support, TIC training and coaching, and child care voucher administration, in accordance with CDSS guidance. CDSS mandates that counties contract with their locally designated R&R agency for Navigator and TIC services, and each county has only one such agency. Central Valley Children's Services Network (CVCSN) is Fresno County's R&R agency and also an approved Alternative Payment Program (APP) provider with the infrastructure and experience to administer voucher payments.

While two agencies in Fresno County provide child care voucher distribution, the Department finds that consolidating all Bridge Program components under CVCSN is in the best interest of the County and allows CVCSN to administer the voucher distribution component. The Internal Services Department - Purchasing concurs with the Department's assessment that this satisfies the exception to the competitive bidding process required by AP 34.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The maximum amount of the agreement (\$5,211,590) will be fully offset with a combination of State, Federal, and Realignment funds and Emergency Child Care Bridge funding. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues will be included in the Department's Org 5610 FY 2026-27 Recommended Budget and will be included in subsequent budget requests.

DISCUSSION:

The Bridge Program, established by Senate Bill 89, (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2017), is designed to reduce child care barriers for children and parenting youth in the foster care system, their caregiver families, and nonminor dependent parents. The goals of the Bridge program are to increase the number of successful home-based family care placements, increase stability, support permanency, increase the ability of child care programs to meet the needs of children in foster care, and maximize funding to support the child care needs for eligible families.

The Bridge program consists of three components: Child Care Navigator services, TIC training and coaching, and child care voucher distribution. Child Care Navigators, employed by the local R&R agency, assist families in identifying child care options, completing applications, and developing long-term care plans. TIC training and coaching is provided to child care providers to strengthen their ability to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma. These two components are available to all eligible families, regardless of whether they receive a Bridge Program voucher.

Eligible families, parenting youth, and nonminor dependent parents may receive time-limited vouchers to help pay for child care for children from birth through age 12, and up to age 21 for children with exceptional needs. Vouchers are initially issued for six months, with extensions allowed if families cannot transition to long-term care or if ending the subsidy would disrupt a child's placement or permanency plan. Counties may make payments directly to families or child care providers and must follow state-approved payment rates.

The Department has contracted with CVCSN for the Bridge Program services from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023, with the option to extend for up to three additional 12-month terms.

If approved, the recommended agreement will be effective July 1, 2026, with a three-year base contract and two optional one-year renewal terms. Either party, upon providing 30-days advanced written notice, may terminate the agreement without cause.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #73, June 22, 2021

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Suspension of Competition Acquisition Request  
On file with Clerk - Agreement with CVCSN

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander